*Note: I have copies some information from the links below for future use*

Vodka

Vodka is a clear liquor manufactured from ethyl alcohol. It lacks color, and normally has very little [taste](http://www.drinksmixer.com/desc28.html) or aroma.  
  
Vodka is the base ingredient for many cocktails, mixed [drinks](http://www.drinksmixer.com/desc28.html), and alcoholic products today.   
  
It is said to have been originally created from potatoes in Russia for medicinal purposes. Nowadays, Vodka is distilled from barley, wheat or rye.  
  
Adulterated vodkas are now a popular alternative to the original. These will normally contain a mixture of sweeteners, flavourings, colorings and fruit juices. Most flavored vodka contains 30-35% alcohol, whereas clear vodka is normally 40%, with a few brands offering a 50% product on top.

Nutritional Information

(per 1 oz serving)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Calories (kcal) Energy (kj) Fats Carbohydrates Protein | 69 288 0 g 0 g 0 g | Fiber Sugars [Cholesterol](http://www.drinksmixer.com/desc28.html) Sodium Alcohol | 0 g 0 g 0 mg 0 mg 11.3 g |

<http://www.drinksmixer.com/desc28.html>

*I was not aware that vodka has this much amount of energy.*

**Intro:**

Vodka is the best mixing liquor of all of the base spirits as it has no distinct color, taste or aroma and is therefore essential to every bar. With a bottle of vodka and a few additional ingredients one can make a variety of cocktails including [Vodka Tonic](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/vdka_tnc.htm), [Screwdriver](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/srwdrvr_vdka.htm), [Cosmopolitan](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/cosmo.htm) and so on.

**Distillation:**

The standard method of making vodka is by [fermenting](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailspeak/g/frmntatn_spk.htm) and [distilling](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailspeak/g/dstltn_spk.htm) grain, although potatoes and beets are two popular alternatives. Vodka is a rectified spirit, meaning it is [distilled](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailspeak/g/dstltn_spk.htm) at least three times, it is then filtered through charcoal. Vodka requires no [aging](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailspeak/g/aged_spk.htm) and is ready to drink right away. Many vodkas are also infused with fruit or spice flavorings to create popular flavored vodkas like lemon, berry and pepper.

**Taste:**

Since vodka has no distinct taste a stylistic difference in the different brands is their texture on the tongue, or mouth feel. Two brands that represent the two prominent styles are Absolut and Stolichnaya. Absolut has an oily, silky sweet texture, while Stolichnaya is clean and watery with an almost medicinal finish.

**Heat:**

Most vodkas are 40 percent [alcohol](http://cocktails.about.com/od/stockyourbar/tp/bst_shkrs.htm), however a distinct difference is the heat that is revealed on the tongue, this plays an important role in brand choice. Less expensive brands tend to burn in the mouth and throat while premium brands are quite smooth and excellent for shots and Martinis.

<http://cocktails.about.com/od/spirits/p/vdka_101b.htm>

*“Heat: … a distinct difference is the heat that is revealed on the tongue, this plays an important role in brand choice.” - John’s vodka should be compared to other brands. Price and marketability will depend on whether it will tend to burn in the mouth and throat, or whether it is smooth.*

10 Most Popular Brands of Premium Vodka

[**Absolut Vodka**](http://www.absolut.com/us)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/w/H/-/-/absolut_brooklyn.jpg)*Photo Courtesy: © Absolut Vodka*

Absolut received most of its fame from innovative advertising depicting bottles of their vodka in various graphically enhanced situations. It has worked extremely well for the company and I admire the campaigns over the years. However, their vodka to me is good, but not great.

Absolut does give vodka drinkers a quality product . It is a clean tasting vodka that will (in moderation) not leave you screaming for ibuprofen in the morning. One thing I love about Absolut is innovation in flavors. Their city line of flavor vodkas almost always impresses me as they are truly unique flavor combinations that, though they are limited releases, are inspiring for [homemade infusions](http://cocktails.about.com/od/spirits/ht/infusions.htm).

[**Grey Goose Vodka**](http://www.greygoose.com/)

[Grey Goose La Poire Vodka - Grey Goose Pear Flavored Vodka](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/H/4/-/-/grey_goose_lapoire.jpg)*Photo Courtesy of: © Grey Goose Vodka*

Grey Goose is one of my "go to" vodkas. When in doubt order Grey Goose, it's that simple because you will never be dissapointed. Grey Goose is one of the smoothest, most mixable vodkas you can find and it is every where. If you do not see this brand at your local bar or liquor store my suggestion is to go somewhere else because any reputable liquor provider will at least have the Grey Goose clear vodka. This is a staple.

Beyond their staple clear vodka, Grey Goose produces a nice line of flavored vodkas. The most impressive is La Poire, their pear-flavored vodka which is a delight in a variety of cocktails. I could mix with that one all day.

[**Van Gogh Vodka**](http://vangoghvodka.com/)

[Van Gogh Blue Wheat Vodka](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/o/F/-/-/van_gogh_blue.jpg)*Photo Courtesy of: © Van Gogh Imports*

When it comes to premium vodkas, Van Gogh is undoubtedly one of the best and their product range tops 20 out at different vodkas as of 2010 and even though it began as a Dutch [gin](http://cocktails.about.com/od/spirits/p/gist_gin.htm) distillery, this brand is one of the best you will find when it comes to vodka.

The clear Van Gogh is a benchmark in vodka and is smooth, clean, and refreshing. Though, if you really want a vodka treat you have to check out the [Van Gogh Blue](http://cocktails.about.com/od/vodkareviews/fr/van_gogh_vodkas_2.htm), a triple wheat vodka that is profoundly smooth and surprisingly flavorful.

When it comes to flavored vodka, Van Gogh has almost anything you can imagine. You will find the "average" Orange, Mango, Citrus, and [Pomegranate](http://cocktails.about.com/od/spiritreviews/gr/vangogh_pomrvw.htm), but you will also find some decadence in the [Espressos](http://cocktails.about.com/od/vodkareviews/gr/vgogh_espresso.htm), Chocolate, and [Caramel](http://cocktails.about.com/od/vodkareviews/fr/van_gogh_vodkas_2.htm).

[**Ketel One Vodka**](http://www.ketelone.com/)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/H/I/-/-/ketelone_vodka.jpg)*Photo Credit: © Shannon Graham*

If you are seeking the ultimate of smooth vodkas with no frills, Ketel One is it. It is truly one of the cleanest vodkas you will come across and it's almost a shame to mix it into a cocktail because it is thrilling when it's chilled and served over a little ice. This is a vodka that begs to be shared among a few close friends using that vodka chiller set you love so much.

The Ketel One company thrives on the legacy of the Nolet family of Dutch distillers, which are now in the 10th generation, and this family legacy is unusual in the big names of vodka. You will also notice that their two flavored vodkas (Citroen and Oranje) are delicately flavored. If I mix Ketel One I like to keep it simple for that fact:a [Vodka Tonic](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/vdka_tnc.htm) or [Martini](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/mrtni.htm) is best.

[**Chopin Vodka**](http://www.chopinvodka.com)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/1/I/-/-/Sandra-Bullock-Receives-American-Riviera-Award-Presented-by-Chopin-Vodka.jpg)*Sandra Bullock with Enormous Bottle of Chopin Vodka*

What makes Chopin unique? It is a Polish potato vodka named after the famous composer, [Frederic Chopin](http://classicalmusic.about.com/od/classicalcomposers/p/chopinprofile.htm). If you are looking for one of the smoothest vodkas available this is a great choice. Potato vodkas are not usually as well received as those distilled from grains, but the quality of Chopin will change anyone's mind about the spud. If you want to compare potato and grain vodkas, put this one side by side with Ketel One. You will have a great appreciation for both and expand your palate to recognize each base in the future.

While its counterparts have expanded to follow the flavored vodka trend, Chopin has remained a lone vodka brand. When you have a great thing, don't mess with it, and Chopin is without a doubt a great vodka.

[**Belvedere Vodka**](http://www.belvederevodka.com/)

Belvedere is one very fine Polish vodka that comes in an elegant frosted bottle that looks great on display in the bar. The original, clear bottling is the flagship of the brand and is an excellent choice for high-class cocktails. It's unique taste comes from the use rye, making it a vodka with some flavor backbone.

The brand is not as well known for the rest of their product line, though they are experimenting with some nice flavors. While Pink Grapefruit, Black Raspberry, Orange, and Citrus flavors are elegant and gentle, there is Belvedere IX (One-X), which is an infusion of 9 different flavors from cinnamon and almond to guarana, ginger, and jasmine. It's interesting to say the least.

[**Three Olives Vodka**](http://threeolives.com/)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/R/B/-/-/threeolives_espresso.jpg)*Photo Courtesy: © Three Olives Vodka*

Three Olives' line of vodka is one of my favorites to experiment with and I have a lot of fun coming up with new drinks from their creative and smooth flavors, though at times it is a challenge. Sure, Three Olives has a wonderful clear vodka and the flavors no vodka company can be without like berry and citrus, but if you look at their product line of 16 (as of 2010) you'll see some tastes you can't find elsewhere.

Some of the unique finds include Triple Shot Espresso, which is a wallop of caffeine and flavor, and the Root Beer is simply tasty, though somewhat limited. This is also the only brand I know of that has thought of Tomato vodka and it's interesting to say the least. You will also find Three Olives to have wonderful fruit vodkas.

[**Stolichnaya Vodka**](http://www.stoli.com/)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/J/C/-/-/stoli_vodka.jpg)*Photo Courtesy of © Stolichnaya*

Stolichnaya (better known as Stoli) is a perfect everyday premium vodka that is perfect for mixing in cocktails. This is one of the best Russian vodkas on the worldwide market and you can usually find most of their flavors right alongside the clear Stoli. One thing you will notice about this brand is that the flavors have a decidedly Russian flare to their names. If you see Peachik, Strasberi, or Oranj you can probably figure out that they are peach, stawberry, and orange respectively. All of the flavors have this unique spelling and they are all quite pleasant tasting as well. Try [Peachik](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/cosmo.htm) in a Cosmopolitan or Vanil in (what else?) a [Black Russian](http://cocktails.about.com/od/cocktailrecipes/r/blkrusn_ctl.htm).

[**Zyr Vodka**](http://www.zyrvodka.com/)

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/cocktails/1/0/k/8/-/-/zyr_vodka.jpg)*Photo Courtesy of: © Zyr Russian Vodka*

Zyr is moving up on the list of favorite vodkas of all time. This Russian winter wheat and rye vodka is a fabulous find, though the drawback is that it is not as readily available as many of the others on this list. I had to include it simply because it is beginning to make a big name for itself and I want to encourage more vodka connoisseurs to think about keeping this in stock on a regular basis.

Like Chopin, Zyr is a one bottle top shelf vodka. You will (not yet anyway) find a flavored or over-proof Zyr and, as with Chopin, that would be unnecessary.

[**Hangar One Vodka**](http://www.hangarone.com)

There are two aspects that make Hangar One different from the other popular premium vodkas. It is distilled from viognier grapes and it is done in an abandoned Navy aircraft hangar (thus the name). This is one of the newer brands on the list in the terms that it hasn't been as widely called for until the last few years. However, when you get a taste of it you will find out why it is becoming the call vodka of choice for many people.

The grapes are an interesting base distillate that only a few vodkas take on (most notably Ciroc), it takes skill to get it right, and Hangar One hit the nail on the head with their distillation. They also have some interesting flavors: Citron "Buddha's Hand", Kaffir Lime, and Mandarin Blossom.

<http://cocktails.about.com/od/vodkareviews/tp/5-Most-Popular-Brands-Of-Premium-Vodka.htm>

*Will John’s be lined with the premium brands?*